

**Andrew Jackson to Francis Preston Blair, May 7, 1844,
from Correspondence of Andrew Jackson. Edited by
John Spencer Bassett.**

class=MsoNormal>TO FRANCIS P. BLAIR.

Hermitage, May 7, 1844.

confidential.

My dear Blair, A large Texian meeting was held at Nashville on the 4th instant—on that morning Clays letter was published in the Banner against annexation. This has prostrated Clay with the Whiggs here. I have heard several, who have called to see me, declare that they now abandon Clay forever. But whilst the democracy were exulting viewing Clay a dead political Duck, here comes Mr. VanBurens letter, 1 that revived the whiggs who now say, that they can support Clay now on the the same ground that the democracy can support Mr. V.B. both being against the annexation, and the whiggs as well as the democrats in the south and west being in favor of annexation. The most of the whiggs having no principles by which they are governed can all rally for Clay, not so the democrats—we go for principle not men, we never abandon principle for policy, therefore believing that our best interest of the South, as well as the safety of our country, are now in jeopardy by the secrete interference of England, as publicly announced by Browman 2 etc etc in parliment.

1 These two letters on the Texan question, from Clay and Van Buren, recognized by most people as the assured candidates for the Presidency, were the most striking phenomena of the campaign of 1844. The first probably defeated Clay and the second enabled Van Buren's enemies to snatch away the nomination that was all but in his hands. Both

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were published on Apr. 27, Clay's in the National Intelligencer , Van Buren's in the Globe.

2 Henry Brougham. See Jackson to Major Lewis of the same date.

Mexico, having for six years carried on against Texas a marauding war only, and that upon the most savage principles, inconsistent with all principles of civilised warfare, and against which all civilised nations which have acknowledged the Independence of Texas ought to unite, and by peaceful means, if it could, put it down, and if this could not be obtained peaceably, then all civilised and christian powers are bound to unite upon christian principle to put an end to this savage and inhuman war. The United States having been the first nation that acknowledged Texian Independence, are we not bound to be the first to boldly step forward to put an end to this savage marauding war. I think so. Texas harassed, and her means of war limited presents herself to the united states to be annexed to, and protected by the United States. There being no embodied army marching against Texas for reconquest, great Britain trying to obtain the Liberation of the slaves in Texas for the avowed purpose of coercing the south and west into this measure by destroying the value of this property and opening a way for our slaves to run away to Texas, is [it] not time for the south and west to take the alarm, and as Texas has presented herself for voluntary annexation, which at once shuts the door against this impending evil, and secures Neworleans in case of a war with England, can it be, could it be, that any one could seriously suppose that the whole south and west would not unite upon this important subject, and with one voice cry out annexation.

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However we may be attached to men, we cannot abandon principle, and the best interests of the south and west, the safety of our country, fearful of the consequence that we may offend England, or take this quasi war of Mexico on Texas, upon ourselves, when duty calls we have no fear in the west. I say for one ratify the treaty, and take all consequences.

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we who declared Mexico independent, under all the t[h]reats of Spain, when Spain was with a formidable army in possession of all the strong forts upon the Gulf, that we, when we have seen six years gone by since we have acknowledged the Independence of Texas, Mexico not in possession of a foot of soil claimed by Texas, and no army organised for the invasion of Texas, an armistis brought about under the influence of Great Britain to give her time to carry into effect all her intrigues, to postpone the annexation to when. Can there be any prospects of a more favourable time. I answer no.

These letters are well calculated to encourage Mexico, under a secrete league with great Britain to invade Texas by a large army with secrete funds from great Britain and aid by sea, and when Texas is reconquered to be ceded to great Britain to pay the debt to great Britain and her subjects. To prevent all danger from this intrigue, I say ratify the Treaty. If that cannot be done, let the House of Representatives pass a law annexing Texas to the united states, as a part of Louisiana, and without any necessity transfered to Spain, and I will gurantee that we have neither war with Mexico nor great Britain. If we do not now accept the Boon when freely offered mark me, my dear friend, that we never get it hereafter only at the point of the bayonet. The idea of posponing the acceptance now, on grounds of expediency, policy, or political capital, shews a want of common sense that I do sincerely deplore.

If Mr. VanBuren after his letter, saying, These are my views on general principles, but having no knowledge of the state of facts as it regards foreign interference I have barely to add, If any foreign interference have been attempted or is now in progress, by which the great interests of the south and west may be seriously injured and the safety of our common country now or hereafter may be put in Jeopardy, the safety of the Republic being the first object I say then hesitate not.

I am for the annexation regardless of all consequences. Clays letter killed him, and such a conclusion would have united whig and democrat upon him, VanBuren, and he would have obtained almost a unanimous vote. I am truly filled with regret, and I must be candid—I

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am fearful his V.B. letter will loose him many western and southern votes at the Baltimore convention and that of Col. Bentons 3 will enable Penn jnr. to put Col. Benton politically down in Missouri: All our democratic at Nashville are in sackcloth about it. I had a good deal of conversation with that good friend of mine B.F. Butler Esqr. He was of the opinion

3 Benton's letter on Texas was published in the Globe on Apr. 29, 1844. He approved a treaty to annex "Old Texas", i. e. , Texas under Mexican authority; but he considered the desire to carry its bounds to the Rio Grande as an unwarranted attempt to dismember Mexico. See Meigs's Life of Benton , p. 346.

285 that Mr. V. B. would occupy the ground you had in your first long Editorial. If he had all would have been well. How the ground in any way could be changed I cannot see, without the imputation of want of principle, man worship etc. This will not, cannot be done by the democrats here who act from principle and public safety of country and property. I write under a vertigo, great pain in head and body, and fearfull that the letters of my dear friends—you are aware of my friendship for both—have afforded the means for their political destruction, by the democracy of the south and west, withdrawing their support from them. I must close by barely adding the great excitement that prevails, and the declarations by both whiggs and democrats that they will vote for no man for the Presidency who is opposed to immediate annexation. If Mr. V.B. had only concluded his letter as I have indicated, whiggs and democrats would have been all VanBuren men.

I am very feeble, but excited by the subject, mortified at Mr. V.B. letter and Col. Bentons, for their is no evidence of ever the time being more propitious than the present, the necessitous situation of Texas, the prospects of the encouragement posponement will give to Mexico, with the secrete aid of great Britain and the consequences, makes my tears flow with regret. Texas may feel herself insulted and neglected by the refusal of the U. States and make a treaty with great Britain ruinous to the south west and to the safety of the Union, when we will have to fight both great Britain and mexico—on such an event what curses must fall upon all who refused to receive Texas.

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With our kind salutations to you and all your Houshold, may god bless you and yours and direct you in all yr. ways is the prayer of your sincere friend,

P.S. I am awaiting the anouncement of the Ecouchment of miss Emuckfa. A. J.

P.S. When you view the incoherence of my letter you will easily see the state of my health.